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Dear Mr. Fleming:

Recently there was organized under the aegis of the Assistant Director of COM for Telecommunications, an ad hoc committee to study ways and means of enabling the State Department to assure itself of minimum essential facilities for exchange of telegraphic communications with and among United States Foreign Service posts abroad. The availability of facilities which can assure an uninterrupted flow of communications, particularly in times of emergency, is of grave concern to the Department.

Numerous instances of civil strife in foreign countries, which usually result in disruption of communication channels, such as that recently experienced in Buenos Aires, or deliberate jamming of civil and military circuits in time of war, make the availability of such facilities mandatory. The diplomatic service of the United States has been seriously handicapped in conducting its essential business when civil disruptions have occurred. In time of war, with the advent of jamming of civil and military circuits, the security of the nation may well be effected. The

The Honorable

Arthur S. Fleming,

Director, Office of Defense Mobilization,
Washington 25, D. C.

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diplomatic service is in a poor competitive position with other world powers who are generally able to provide for their requirements because they do not find themselves restricted by law. The diplomatic service of the United States is restricted in its ability to reach bilateral agreement which, in most instances, would involve the granting of reciprocal privileges, by the restrictions contained in the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.

The ad hoc committee, comprised of Representatives from ODM, OSD, FCC, FBI, CIA and State considered various aspects of the problem and concluded that a staff paper setting forth all relevant detail would facilitate its deliberation. A small working group from CIA and the Department of State have prepared such a paper which I attach with my concurrence. It is suggested that copies be made available to each member of the ad hoc committee for study.

If the committee reaches agreement on the essential features of this presentation it is recommended that simple qualifications of Sections 301 and 310 of the Act authorizing "exceptions approved by the President" be recommended to the Congress.

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Since it is impossible to anticipate when disruptions may occur in the provision of communications services abroad, I consider that the resolution of this problem warrants early action by all concerned.

Sincerely yours,

Under Secretary

Attachments:

As stated.

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